United Nations
World Summit for Social Development

FACT SHEET/MAY 1994

WHAT: The World Summit for Social Development, convened by the United Nations

WHEN: 6-12 March 1995

WHERE: Bella Centre, Copenhagen, Denmark

WHY A SOCIAL SUMMIT?

Although promising a future of accelerated social and economic progress, the end of the cold war has had a destabilizing effect on many societies in the short term. Unemployment, poverty, crime, inter-ethnic violence and civil warfare are on the rise in most parts of the world. Social and economic crises are eroding, often drastically, the substantial material progress achieved overall during the second half of the century.

Social tensions do not stay within national borders—they travel. Increasing migration and flows of refugees fuel xenophobia and racism. Crumbling political stability in one nation threatens peace and security in others.

In past decades, summit meetings have brought together world leaders to defuse political crises and find common ground on pressing problems. The World Summit for Social Development will likewise bring heads of State or Government together to address the social disintegration and world disorder that threaten global security and development. Meeting in Copenhagen in 1995, world leaders will define social development and human security priorities and agree to action at national and international levels.

The Summit furthers the commitment, made in the Charter of the United Nations, to promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development with a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being". Three core issues have been identified:

- Reduction and elimination of widespread poverty;
- Productive employment and the reduction of unemployment;
- Social integration.

The Summit will tackle these issues by charting new directions for social policies. It will make a moral case for solidarity, for the integration of disadvantaged groups and for the promotion of existing UN agreements, including those concerning human rights, labour rights and social justice. The future of the UN's work in the social and economic fields will be shaped by the policies and commitments agreed to in Copenhagen in 1995.

A CYCLE OF UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES

Social issues have been placed at the top of the international agenda by an ongoing cycle of major UN conferences, including the 1990 World Summit for Children, the 1992 Earth Summit (UN Conference on Environment and Development) and the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. Scheduled for 1994 are the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction and the International Conference on Population and Development. The cycle will culminate in 1995 with the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, capped by the commemoration of the United Nations Fiftieth Anniversary on 24 October 1995.

WHO WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE SOCIAL SUMMIT?

The two-day Summit will be held at the level of heads of State or Government. It will be preceded by five days of meetings among their personal representatives, other high-level officials and experts. Summit consultations will also involve representatives from Governments, United Nations programmes and agencies, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, national liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity, experts and professional associations.

THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The level of non-governmental organization (NGO) involvement in UN conferences has been rising since the 1992 Earth Summit. Recognizing that these organizations are key actors in advancing social development, the Summit Preparatory Committee adopted special modalities for NGO accreditation.

Accordingly, NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will be accredited upon written request to: NGO Unit/DPCSD, Room DC2-2340, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA, Fax: (212) 963-3892. Other NGOs seeking accreditation will be asked to complete an application form which can be obtained from the NGO Unit at the address above.

For general inquiries, NGOs may also contact: NGO Liaison Officer of the Secretariat of the World Summit for Social Development, Room DC2-1372, United Nations, New York, NY 10017, USA, Tel.: (212) 963-1957, Fax: (212) 963-3062 or United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS), 866 UN Plaza, Rm. 6015, New York, NY 10017, USA, Tel.: (212) 963-3125, Fax: (212) 963-8712.

BACKGROUND

Noting the importance of the social component of sustainable development, General Assembly resolution 47/92 of 16 December 1992, which calls for convening the World Summit for Social Development, identifies eleven major Summit objectives:

- Place the needs of people at the centre of development;
- Secure international, governmental and NGO policies that promote social development and enable the active involvement of all citizens;
- Place special priority on the social development needs of the least developed countries;
- Attain an appropriate balance between economic efficiency and social justice in growth-oriented, equitable and sustainable development environments, in accordance with nationally defined priorities;
- Address creatively the interaction between the social function of the State, market responses to social demands and the imperatives of sustainable development;
- Identify common problems of socially marginalized and disadvantaged groups and promote their social integration and attainment of equal opportunities;
- Promote legal protection, effective social welfare and education and training for all;
- Ensure effective delivery of social services to the disadvantaged;
- Mobilize resources for social development at the local, national, regional and international levels;
- Recommend effective actions and policies for the UN system in the sphere of social development, and particularly for the Commission for Social Development.

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

The Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the World Summit for Social Development, representing all Member States and UN specialized agencies, held its organizational session in New York from 12 to 16 April 1993. It elected a Bureau composed of Chairman Juan O. Somavia, Chilean Ambassador to the UN, and nine Vice-Chairmen representing Australia, Cameroon, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland and Zimbabwe. Denmark, the host country for the Summit, serves as ex officio member.

At the PrepCom's first session, at UN Headquarters in New York, 31 January-11 February 1994, a focused analysis of core issues emerged from the contributions of 142 delegations (many of them supported by ministerial and policy experts), 149 NGOs and representatives from UN programmes, specialized agencies and regional commissions. Outlines of a draft Declaration and a draft Programme of Action were agreed to.

Draft texts of the Declaration and the Programme of Action will be prepared by the Secretariat and issued in June 1994. This will enable widespread discussion of the draft texts prior to the the PrepCom's second session, 22 August-2 September 1994, in New York. The two documents will be further refined at the third session of the PrepCom, to be held 16-27 January 1995, again in New York.

At the second PrepCom session there will also be:

- A review of UN system activities on social development;
- A review of data sources and publications on social development issued by the UN;
- Reports on meetings of experts and symposia organized as part of the Summit preparations;
- National reports, NGO reports and reports from UN programmes and agencies.

SUMMIT DECLARATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

The draft Declaration will begin by describing the world social situation and the reasons for convening the Summit. Then it will enunciate principles, goals, policy orientations and common challenges to be addressed at the local, national, regional and international levels, followed by a statement of commitments and issues relating to implementation and follow-up.

The draft Programme of Action will complement the Declaration by proposing, in detail, actions to be taken to implement social development strategies. It will focus on strategies in five areas:

- Ensuring an enabling environment for social development;
- Reducing and eliminating widespread poverty;
- Creating productive employment and reducing unemployment;
- Social integration;
- Implementation and follow-up, taking advantage of the capabilities of the UN system, international financial institutions and other intergovernmental organizations.

SECRETARIAT

A UN Secretariat unit, headed by Mr. Jacques Baudot, is coordinating arrangements for the Summit. This unit is located within the UN Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in New York, under the responsibility of Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai.

KEY UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENTS

Report on the World Social Situation 1993. United Nations (Sales No. E.93.IV.2. ISBN 92-1-330140-5).

World Summit for Social Development: An overview. Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.166/PC/6). Analysis of the core issues to be addressed by the Summit and policy measures to attain its objectives in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/92: Expert meeting on Social Integration (A/CONF.166/PC/8); Expert meeting on the Expansion of Productive Employment (A/CONF.166/PC/9).

ELECTRONIC DATABASES

Official United Nations documents on the Summit may be accessed on a number of electronic networks including:
Association for Progressive Communications (APC) users can access files via the access code: <un.socdev.docs> conference.
Internet users can access files via gopher by connecting to gopher.undp.org.
Users without gopher access can search by E-Mail by sending a message to gopher@undp.org. An automated response will then give instructions on how to access, via E-Mail, documents on the Summit which can be located under the heading *United Nations Conferences.*

PRE-SUMMIT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

31 MAY-4 JUNE 1994, TUNIS, TUNISIA
African NGOs Regional Meeting, convened by Enda inter/arabe, Environment and Development in the Arab World. Contact: Enda inter/arabe, Cité Venus Bloc 2, Elmenzan VII 1004 Tunis, Tunisia, Tel./Fax: (2161) 766 234.

1 JUNE 1994, NEW YORK
Issuance by the Secretariat of the draft texts of the Declaration and Programme of Action.

1 JUNE 1994, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK; DHAKA, BANGLADESH; WASHINGTON, DC, USA
Release of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 1994, addressing the issue of human security.

27-29 JUNE 1994, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
Expert group meeting on Reduction of Poverty

8-10 JULY 1994, HELSINKI, FINLAND
Regional consultations held by the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW), and a global NGO Preparatory Meeting. Contact: ICVA, 13 rue Gautier, CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland, Tel.: (4122) 732-6600, Fax: (4122) 738-9904; ICSW, 380 St. Antoine Street West, Suite 3200, Montreal, Quebec H2Y 3X7, Canada, Tel.: (514) 287-3280, Fax: (514) 987-1567.

22-24 JULY 1994, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
Round table on Change: Social Conflict or Harmony?, led by UNDP, by invitation only. Contact: UNDP Study Programme, One United Nations Plaza, DC 1-1952, New York, NY 10017, USA, Tel.: (212) 906-5709; Fax: (212) 906-5776.

1-3 AUGUST 1994, BEIJING, CHINA
International symposium on The Role of Government in Social Development

22 AUGUST-2 SEPTEMBER 1994, NEW YORK
Second Session of the Preparatory Committee of the Summit

12-18 OCTOBER 1994, MANILA, PHILIPPINES
Regional Preparatory Conference for the Summit, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

16-27 JANUARY 1995, NEW YORK
Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Summit

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Department of Public Information
United Nations, Room S-1040
New York, NY 10017, USA
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